

My name is John Onderdonk and I'm the faculty advisor for KSYM-FM, a student run station owned by the Alamo Community college district. I wanted to talk about the impact that the consolidation and the subsequent loss of local content has had on non-commercial stations like ours.

First of all, the creative voices of the city now have fewer outlets -- especially for local and regional musicians. Our station integrates local music into our rotation and we are constantly approached by musicians -- good musicians -- who are desperate to have their music played over the airwaves. The larger, group-owned stations do not play any locally produced music, at all. This lack of creative outlets has a stifling effect on the artistic and cultural life of the city.

Secondly, there are fewer outlets now where non-profit organizations can be heard. There are fewer public service announcements and the demand for air time has increased dramatically. Airtime that was once used for PSA's is now used for ads. Many LOCAL non-profit organizations have a hard time making their voices heard. When you as an owner, are not connected to the city, it's easier to ignore the needs of its citizens and concentrate on profit.

And thirdly, our college station was established to train students to enter jobs in broadcasting. The consolidation of the ownership of broadcast outlets means that there are now fewer jobs than ever for our graduates. The deceptive practice of voice-tracking which leads people to believe they are listening to a local DJ instead of one hundreds of miles away, has eliminated local jobs and local content. Consolidation has also reduced the number of jobs in areas such as sales and traffic and promotions. Where there used to be dozens of jobs for our graduates, there are now a mere handful.

Finally, one of the things that San Antonio has always prided itself on is its diversity of culture. It gives our city its strength and its vitality. Consolidation, by definition and by its very nature stifles diversity.

I urge you to reverse the rules of mass ownership for media.